



Mobile Communications Pilot program



Mobile Communications Pilot Program

FAALC
Looking for a Better Way
ISO 9000 Certified

Better Communications Less Cost

What is the Mobile Communication Pilot Program?

This program was developed by the FAA Logistics Center to allow employees to use their personal cellular phones for Government business and receive reimbursement for such usage.

Why was the program developed?

The world turns on a dime and rapid response to customer requests often depend on corporate communications. Cellular or "cell" phones have become a critical part of the communications process for the Logistics Center. Recently, the Logistics Center discovered that they were not taking advantage of new technology and versatile plans. They also realized that many employees who had a business need for a cell phone also had a personal cell phone. Many different phones, plans, and services were used.



Cell Phones Are
Critical to FAALC
Communications

M o r e..

How did the Logistics Center develop the program?

First, criteria was developed to determine who would be eligible to participate in the pilot program. Considerations included whether or not the employee had a Government cell phone, past business phone usage, supervisor's approval, and phone plan restrictions.

Procedures were developed for eligible employees to receive reimbursement of a flat payment rate of \$30 per month. Additional steps were required for participants who exceeded this rate in any month. The employee's supervisor is responsible for evaluating and obligating the funds for payment.

Plan options and comparisons were consolidated to help employees with decisions concerning services.

Volunteers were solicited from the approved pool of eligible employees. A Mobile communications Agreement, which included the requirements and restrictions, was written and signed by the participants.

The program was implemented on September 1, 2000 and will be reevaluated in six months to determine cost effectiveness.



**Get All the
Details on our
Website!**

**You can find all the details
of the FAA Logistics Cen-
ter's Mobile Communication
Pilot Program on our web-
site at:**

***[Http://www.mmac.jccbi.gov/
aml/mobile](http://www.mmac.jccbi.gov/aml/mobile)***

**Check it out today! You'll
find samples of memos, se-
lection criteria, and a reim-
bursement form.**

**FAA Logistics
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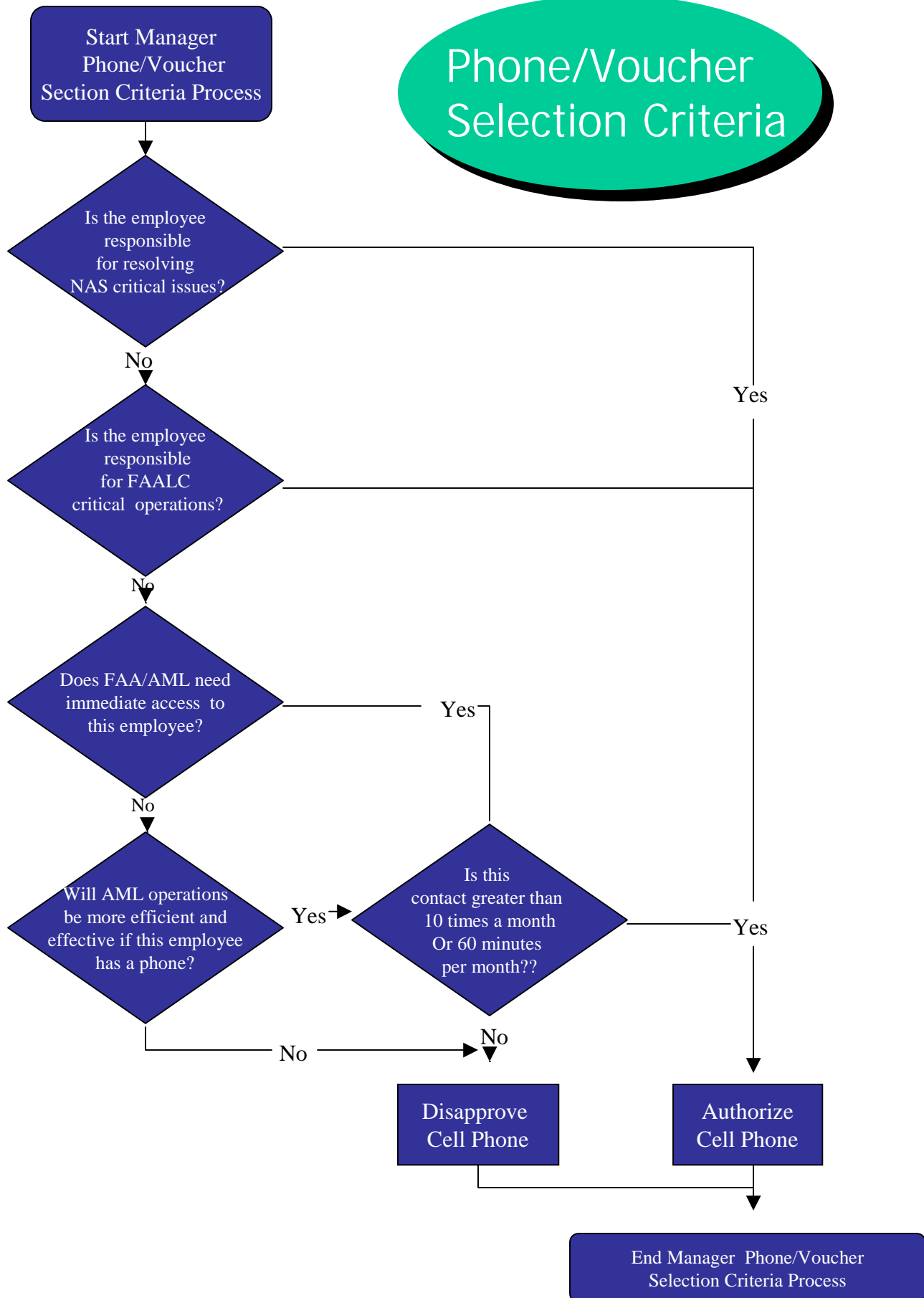
Phone: 405-954-4358
Fax: 405-954-4511
<http://www.mmac.jccbi.gov/aml>

Manager Phone/Voucher Selection Criteria

- **Is the employee responsible to resolve National Air Space (NAS) issues? (i.e., Quality Services Group Customer Service Representative, Supervisor Antenna Overhaul, etc.)**
- **Is the employee responsible for FAALC critical operations? (i.e., Priority Desk, LAN support, etc.)**
- **Are there times the FAA/Logistics Center needs immediate access to this employee? (i.e., division manager.)**
- **Is this contact greater than 10 times a month?**
- **Will AML operations be more efficient and effective if this employee has a phone?**

Note: The first two questions are immediate criteria to receive a phone or voucher. The last three questions need two out of the three to be a yes for the manager to grant a phone or voucher.

Phone/Voucher Selection Criteria



MEMORANDUM TO: ORGANIZATIONS PLANNING TO USE VOUCHERS FOR CELL PHONES

FROM: The FAA Logistics Center

Subject: Top ten reasons for using vouchers

You will encounter periodic questions from other agencies, accounting departments, or critics as to what the reason is for not reimbursing employees according to the number of calls rather than giving a voucher. The reason is that this approach is a better deal for the American taxpayer.

The typical government institutional approach is to want to reimburse for calls made. This has been the way in which most government systems and managers have operated over the past several decades. This entails detailed itemization of cell phone calls which reimburse the employee only a minimal amount. The tediousness of the task, and the inconvenience this creates relative to the benefit to the employee results in most employees preferring to use the government phone. Thus the government ends up paying unnecessarily high mobile telecommunications costs when it chooses to try to use a cumbersome reimbursement process for employee-owned phones.

The voucher concept is NOT a reimbursement program. It is government payment for a service that is provided by an employee. The service is an employee's consent to provide access to the employee's cell phone for government business.

If more time were available, a detailed discussion could be provided on how travel per diem, mileage reimbursement, and transit benefits do not actually reimburse for costs incurred (for example, per diem is paid whether or not employees actually buy meals). Suffice it to say, although the voucher program is not a reimbursement program, there are similarities between vouchers and the above concepts.

As a tongue in cheek approach to explaining the reasons for using a voucher system instead of a reimbursement system, we have provided the "David Letterman-type" top ten reasons for using this approach (please forgive us, David Letterman! These are not as good as yours.)

TOP TEN REASONS FAALC PAYS A FLAT VOUCHER RATE INSTEAD OF REIMBURSING FOR CALLS

1. It is payment for service (i.e. right to use employee's phone in lieu of providing more expensive government phone), not reimbursement for calls.

2. As evidence of 27,000 GSA phones show, given a choice of itemizing for calls on personal phone to gain reimbursement versus using government phone, at least 27,000 employees opt for using the government phone (more expensive for government and the taxpayer).

3. GSA states the average cost of government phone service is \$41. The voucher system, which costs \$30 and provides equal or better service for government appears to be much cheaper (even using new math.)

4. Dislike of government phones leads some employees to use their own personal phones without reimbursement when itemizing is the only alternative, thereby cheating employees and giving the government an illegal free gift.

5. Itemization of calls involves government review of private phone bills (a step in which we are not interested in taking). It also discourages use of employee owned phones (which results in higher costs to the government.)

6. With most phone services based on time blocks, attempts to reimburse on an itemized approach do not produce a consistently fair result.

7. Administration of a voucher system is simpler, cleaner, and less costly. Providing government phones entails property management, billing, phone use certification, abuse prevention, maintenance, phone service competition, etc.

8. Employees love using their own phone over the government phone. They do not have to carry two batteries, phones and recharging systems when they travel. They also no longer have to worry that they might be tempted to conduct personal business on a government phone. This system encourages them to use their own because of its simplicity. The result is government gets more accessibility to employee.

9. Under the voucher system, the employee can be required to carry the phone at all times, thereby allowing easier contact, rather than a situation with reimbursement for itemized calls where employee may choose to carry the phone only sometimes. (How many government phones sit in a top desk drawer much of the time. How many government phones get lost? How many government phones are years behind the current high tech models available on the market? How many employees are dissatisfied with the phone service provider picked by their respective government agency?)

10. Vouchers are to itemization as per diem is to actual expenses. Vouchers should be done more, itemization less. Vouchers save taxpayers money by reducing the number of costly, cumbersome, government phones.

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Subject: **ACTION:** Mobile Communication Pilot Program

Date:

From: Director, FAA Logistics Center, AML-1

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: Users of Government Issued Cell Phones

Cellular phones have become an essential part of the FAA Logistics Center communications process. In an effort to increase communication effectiveness and reduce cost, we are requesting volunteers for the Mobile Communications Cost Reduction Pilot Program. Volunteers should be those employees who currently have a government cell phone and whose supervisor agrees the equipment is needed. Exceptions to this will be presented to Roy Zumwalt, AML-40 and will be approved by AML-2. Under this pilot program, employees who have currently been issued a government cell phone and who meet the criteria to continue using the equipment may elect to use their personally owned phone for flat rate reimbursement provided they meet the following guidelines:

1. An employee must have an average use of at least 60 minutes and an average of ten or more individual calls per month for the past six months.
2. Participants will personally acquire and maintain a private mobile communication system or mobile phone that meets FAA Logistics Center agency requirements as outlined below:
 - a. Participants must be participating in a cellular phone program that will allow for complete U.S. coverage and that does not charge an extra long distance or roaming fee. This type of plan is normally referred to as a "One Rate Plan". Eligible one rate plans are attached for your review.
 - b. Participant must be in a communications ready mode/status during travel and normal duty hours, or during that period that the government equipment is required to be operative.

Approved volunteers eligible for this pilot program will receive a flat payment rate of \$30 per month upon submission of a standard form 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business. Those participants who exceed this rate in any month can claim the additional amount on their monthly SF-1164 by including a copy of their cellular phone bill. Completion of the SF-1164 requires the signature of the Approving Official (Participant's Supervisor), Authorized Certifying Officer (Budget Analyst,

AML-20), and the Accounting Classification (Appropriation Code). An annual procurement request (PR) for each participant will also need to be completed prior to reimbursement in order to obligate the funds for payment. The participants PR should include the total cost of the pilot program for one year.

Please review the attached plan options. It is our intention to begin this new process September 1, 2000. All interested participants will be required to sign the commitment agreement and return their current hardware to Roy Zumwalt, AML-40. If you are interested in participating, please contact Antonio Pope via cc-mail/or by phone no later than COB August 28, 2000. Negative replies are requested.

We currently have thirty users, at the end of six months we will reevaluate this process to determine cost effectiveness.

Norman Bowles

FAA Logistics Center Mobile Communications Agreement

Cellular phones have become an essential part of the FAA Logistics Center (FAALC) communications process. In an effort to reduce the cost of cellular phones and facilitate effective team communication, we are offering eligible Managers, Assistant Managers, and customer service representatives an opportunity to be reimbursed at a flat payment rate for allowing FAALC employees, team members, customers, etc. the ability to contact you on your personal mobile phone. In short, the FAALC is leasing phone service from your personal cellular phone. The basic flat payment rate will be \$30 per month. This is a voluntary pilot program and is open to managers, assistant managers, and others who currently have a government cell phone and whose average use for the past six months is at least 60 minutes and have averaged ten or more individual calls per month. This pilot program will be evaluated at the end of one year to determine what makes the most business sense. The following paragraphs outline the procedures for participating in this pilot program:

1. Participant will acquire and maintain a private mobile communication system or mobile phone that meets FAALC/Agency requirements as outlined below:
 - a. Participants must be participating in a cellular phone program that will allow for complete U.S. coverage and that does not charge an extra long distance or roaming fee. This type of plan is commonly referred to as a "One Rate Plan".
 - b. Participant must be in a communications ready mode/status during travel and normal duty hours.
2. Participants will be responsible for the maintenance and up-keep of their personal phone system.
 - a. If a participant's phone is inoperative, broken or not available they must notify their supervisor of the period it is not available.
 - b. If a participant's phone is unavailable for mechanical reasons, the BSG will decide whether the voucher should be adjusted to compensate for the down time.
 - c. Participants who cannot maintain reliable equipment/service may not be eligible for continuation in this program.
3. Participants will be required to submit an SF-1164, Claim For Reimbursement For Expenditures on Official Business, at the end of each month. Completion of the SF-1164 requires the signature of their approving official (participant's supervisor) and the signature of the Authorized Certifying Officer (Budget Analyst, AML-20). A copy of the certified SF-1164 will be given to the participant's FAALC budget analyst and one copy will be given to the Information Systems Group mobile phone coordinator, AML-40. The original SF-1164 will then be forwarded to the Financial Operations Division, AMZ-100 in order to receive a cash reimbursement.
4. Participant's manager must sign this agreement for the user to participate in this program.

Participant Signature

Manager Approval

Date

Date



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